

**In the Specification**

Please amend the paragraphs of the specification as indicated below under the appropriate italicized heading:

*Page 8, paragraph 2 replace the paragraph with the following:*

Figure 5 shows the best match of amino acids sequence of *aiiA* gene product (AiiA) (SEQ. ID NO:3) to the consensus aspartyl proteases active site motif (Asp) (SEQ ID NO:4). Symbol: X, any amino acid. A vertical line indicates perfect match.

*Page 17, paragraph 2 replace the paragraph with the following:*

Database searches showed that the *aiiA* gene has no significant similarity to known sequences in the major databases (GenBank, European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Protein Information Resources, and Swiss-Prot) by FASTA and BLAST analysis of either nucleotide or peptide sequence level, suggesting that *AiiA* is a novel protein. Consensus protein motif search using the Genetics Computer Group (Madison, WI) MOTIF program showed that a short peptide sequence, "ILVDTGMPESAV" (SEQ ID NO:3) from position 47 to 58 in AiiA, is similar but not identical to the aspartyl protein active site signature pattern (Rawlings and Barrett, 1995) (Fig. 5).

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**In the Sequence Listing**

Please insert the attached initial Sequence Listing.